

ORPHEUS CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORK

SUSTAINABILITY INDEX FOR INFORMATION AND RESOURCE CENTRES

Self-Evaluation Tool for the Orpheus Civil Society Network

Adapted by Support Office for the Movement of Social Initiatives BORIS

With permission of Mark Renzi Management Systems International Washington DC and Institute for Sustainable Development Vermont

SUSTAINABILITY INDEX FOR INFORMATION AND RESOURCE CENTRES

Self-Evaluation Tool for the Orpheus Civil Society Network

1. About the Index

The Sustainability Index for Information and Resource Centre is a self-evaluation tool created to assess organisations' performance. It may be used by the organisation itself, alternatively it can be assisted by a consultant. The Index allows for in-depth reflection on the functioning of the organisation in every aspect of its activity by analysing its strong points as well as areas where it needs improvement. This tool is being used by the biggest business consulting companies.

2. Structure

The application of the Index requires understating of particular areas of an organisation's operation as it is not a simple 'yes' and 'no' questionnaire. This tool can be modified and adapted as need to the individual needs of the organisation.

There are 6 main sections the organisation can be evaluated in:

- Vision
- Resource management
- Service provision
- Management of human resources
- Financial management
- External relations

Each section is divided into particular fields e.g. human resources comprise: a) skills, b) strategy, c) education, d) mentoring, e) motivation, and f) problem areas. Each field is described and rated on a four-level scale (basic, development, stabilisation, and sustainability). In order that the Index bring the expected results each field must be evaluated.

3. Process

In order for the process to be effective, all staff members, major stakeholders and people connected with the organisation should be included. Everyone individually assesses the stage of development of the organisation, then the whole group debates it and agrees on the final decision by consensus. The evaluation of particular aspects of the organisation's operation is not easy as team members and members of the Board often view the analysed problem differently. This apparent weakness of the Index however, can turn out to be a strong point of this tool as it will allow for obtaining a true picture of the organisation. In order to see the dynamics of the organisation, its team should be committed to repeating this assessment exercise regularly e.g. once a year.

In order to review the effectiveness of the Index, it should be first tested by centres themselves and only then should they promote it among other NGOs in their particular countries.

4. Benefits

The Index is a very comprehensive tool that can help analyse the organisation's performance in every aspect of its operation. It is also flexible so that it can be adjusted to any organisation. The organisation that decides to apply the Index can expect the following benefits:

- Providing an opportunity for in-depth reflection about the organisation by discussing the issue with all key people
- Reviewing the organisation's profile (evaluation of all the aspects of its functioning)
- Indicating the progress or regression of particular fields the organisation operates in during a long-term period
- Providing an opportunity for staff members to improve problem areas and adjust priorities
- Enhancing the organisation's sustainability through regular monitoring

Resources		CRITERIA FOR EACH PROGRESSIVE STAGE											
		Founding			Developing			Expanding/ Consolidating			Sustaining		
Scores		0		1			2			3			4
OVERSIGHT/VISION													
<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Component</i>												
Board	Role of Board	Roles of Board Members and relationship of Board members with Executive Director are unclear.			Board Members understand their role and know how to relate to Executive Director.			Board Members support organisation through contact with key people and important organisations.			Board Members provide guidance and show main programme directions.		
	Functioning of Board	Board is formally constituted but is not yet an active partner.			Board is becoming an active partner. It contributes and seeks resources.			Particular Board Members are responsible for specific fields of organisation's activities. Some Board Members participate in issue committees that exist in organisation.			Board raises considerable resources and funding for organisation. All Board Members actively support organisation.		
Mission		There is no Mission Statement. Group gathers around general objectives, such as environment, health etc.			Mission Statement exists but it is unclear. Board and team are not capable of articulating Mission Statement and people outside organisation do not identify it with organisation.			Mission Statement is clear and coherent with main activities however team is not able to fully articulate Mission.			Mission Statement is clear both for team and Board. Undertaken activities are coherent with Mission. People external to organisation identify Mission with organisation.		
Organisational independence /autonomy/		Organisation relies on one interest group or one donor and is dependent on it.			Organisation is able to cooperate with more than one donor or one interest group.			Organisation is open for cooperation with different interest groups and receives funding to support its programmes from various donors.			Organisation is autonomous in financial and programmatic field. It is able to successfully advocate on behalf of different groups vis-à-vis public authorities, funders as well as private sector.		
General Assembly (GA)/ Council of Foundation (CF)		GA / CF holds meetings as stated in Statute e.g. once a year and makes general decisions based on Statute.			GA / CF holds meeting as stated in Statute analyses organisation's plans and performance.			GA / CF sets directions of organisations activities in close cooperation with Board.			Members of GA / CF become involved in work of organisation in between meetings.		

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MANAGEMENT RESOURCES					
<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Component</i>				
Leadership Style	Board	Organisation is lead by a core founder(s)/ president of organisation.	Organisation is lead by a core founder(s)/ president of organisation and one or two Board Members.	Vision comes from majority of Board that is becoming increasingly involved in development of organisation.	All Board Members contribute to leadership and development of organisation.
	Staff	Staff executes decisions. Decisions are taken by a core founder(s)/president.	One or two staff members, in addition to Executive Director, serves as 'engines' of organisation.	Staff provides an increased 'vital drive' to organisation (participates in organisational development process).	Organisation would survive without current Executive Director or Chairperson of Board.
Planning	Mission/ Overview	Planning process is undertaken on ad hoc basis and is incidental.	Annual plans are developed but they are not integrated into longer-term strategic planing of organisation.	Planning process is being expanded and oriented into future. Long- term/ strategic plans are developed according to mission.	Strategic development plan and annual plans are coherent with mission and are considered as operational instruments. Long-term plans are being reviewed on regular basis.
	Participation	Planning process is top-down. Decisions are taken by Executive Director and Board.	Some staff members participate in planning and decision-making process.	Staff members participate in planning process. Constituency provide information for planning but beneficiaries are excluded from decision-making process.	Constituency and staff contribute to planning process and participate in decision-making process along with Executive Director and Board.
	Work Plan as a Tool	Organisation does not develop workplans.	Workplans are drafted but rarely used by management and staff members	Workplans are adopted by management and staff members but not considered to be dynamic instruments that are subject to modification	Workplans are considered by management and staff as useful tools and are modified as required.
Participatory Management	Decision-making Process	Executive Director or President informs organisation about decisions with no possibility for feedback from staff.	Executive Director and/ or Board takes most of management decisions. Some decisions come from one or two staff members.	Decision-making process is increasingly delegated to program coordinators.	Decision-making process is transparent. Decisions are delegated to appropriate units in organisation.
	Understanding of decision-making process by staff	Executive Director or President informs organisation about decisions (with no clear criteria concerning how they were taken) and with little or no possibility for feedback from staff	Only President and /or Board know criteria for decision-making, staff does not have this information.	Decisions begin to be taken on basis of clear criteria developed and understood by staff. Some staff members participate in decision-making process.	Decision-making process is clear and understandable. All staff members participate in this process.
	Communication Flow	Communication among staff members is channelled through informal means.	There are formal channels of communication and decision-making process emerging e.g. staff meetings.	Communication among staff members is open. Formal and informal channels are established and utilised.	Organisation periodically reviews communication flow to ensure free flow of information through both formal and informal channels.

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Management Systems	Human Resources	There is no formal management system of human resources (job descriptions, recruitment and contracting procedures, etc.).	Some human resources management systems established. Informal employment practices to exist.	All human resources management procedures are established. Occasionally informal mechanisms are used.	Formal human resources management procedures are utilised and understood by staff.
	Archive Systems	There is no archive system.	Files are archived but are not comprehensive or systematic.	Files are systematic and accessible but contain significant gaps.	Files are comprehensive, systematic and accessible.
	Administrative Procedures	There are few formalised administrative procedures. If they exist they are not understood.	Administrative procedures begin to be formalised and understood but they are not written down.	There is a description of administrative procedures but they are not updated. These are basis for resolving conflict situations.	Administrative procedures are updated, as needed. These are basis for resolving conflict situations.
Monitoring and Evaluation (ME)	Integration with Decision Making Process	There are no formal ME mechanisms. Only verbal feedback is used.	ME is undertaken occasionally, usually at request of donors. It is usually undertaken by external consultants.	ME is initiated by staff that is increasingly involved in its implementation. Some management decisions are taken on basis of ME however it continued to be isolated from management.	M&E system is functioning and data analysis is integrated into decision-making process.
	Constituency Feedback	There is no feedback from constituency(s).	Feedback from constituency(s) is received through informal channels.	There are formal mechanisms for receiving feedback from constituency(s) by means of qualitative indicators e.g. surveys. Not all groups connected with organisation are involved in this process.	There are mechanisms established that enable receiving feedback and input from constituency(s) - all groups connected with this organisation are involved in this process.
Volunteers Participation		Organisation does not cooperate with volunteers.	Organisation cooperates with volunteers from time to time.	Organisation is systematically cooperating with volunteers and there is a volunteer coordinator.	Volunteer program is an integral part of organisation; there is a holistic system of volunteers' management.

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SERVICE DELIVERY												
Marketing of Services	Service delivery to clients is supply-driven, often responding to donors' requirements.			Type, quantity and quality of services delivered to NGOs are designed by organisation. there is also selected monitoring practices undertaken.			Organisation makes systematic efforts to obtain clients' feedback to determine appropriate type, quantity and quality of services. NGOs' attitudes and perceptions are accessed (at least on an annual basis) that allows for improving services.			Organisation is committed to systematic improvement of quality of rendered services. Services are tailored to clients' preferences and their quality is continuously monitored and improved by means of clients' feedback.		
Technical Assets necessary for provision of adequate quality of services	Organisation does not have basic equipment necessary to function as a support centre (one computer, access to Internet, phone, fax, e-mail)			Organisation is technically equipped to run basic „support“ functions (e.g. one computer, access to Internet, fax, copy machine)			Organisation has adequate equipment for implementation of identified objectives and is in a position to make it temporarily accessible to NGOs			Organisation has adequate equipment (quality and quantity) to implement its support functions and is in a position to make it accessible to other users (e.g. Internet cafe)		
Diversity of Services	Organisation carries out activities only in two-three areas out of following: 1) short-term consultancy provided in principal office (technical assistance) , 2) long-term consultancy, information on whole non-profit sector in a particular country, 3) management training, legal and fiscal environment for NGOs, 4) advocacy initiatives undertaken on behalf of NGOs, 5) promotion self-regulation and self-identification of NGOs			Organisation runs activities in all mentioned areas, however one or two of them play a dominant role. Minimum activities are performed in remaining areas.			Organisation carries out activities and develops all areas.			Organisation has very well developed <u>all</u> mentioned areas. Moreover, it runs special projects that can be considered its visit card.		
Recipients of Services	Organisation focuses on activities that meets needs of NGOs.			In addition to NGO activities organisation occasionally undertake initiatives addressing local government and public administration as well as other institutions.			Organisation systematically undertakes activities focusing both on NGOs and other institutions (private and public) as well as informal groups that work on community development.			Organisation has developed a coherent and long-term work plan that foresees involvement of various institutions. Plan is consequently implemented.		
Registration of Clients	Organisation does not register recipients of its services.			Organisation register recipients of key services e.g. technical assistance.			All activities of organisation are reflected in a computer database of clients.			Organisation registers all its clients in a computer database. This data is also used in everyday work e.g. analysis of most popular consultation topics, statistics, etc.).		
Process of Social Change	Organisation does not consider itself a vehicle for social change. All its functions are bureaucratised and do not reach out to community.			Organisation becomes involved in activities of other NGOs by supporting them in realisation of concrete projects. Main activities are run from office.			Projects undertaken by organisation are implemented in co-operation with other institutions.			Organisation offers professional services in its office (e.g. library, information and consultancy). It regularly acts as a facilitator of social change related to a particular problem.		

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HUMAN RESOURCES												
<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Component</i>											
Skills		Few staff members have adequate competencies and skills necessary to perform requested tasks.		There are specialists employed/contracted specialists in key areas e.g. accountancy, fundraising. Yet, there is a lack of people with adequate qualifications.		Staff and external experts who can demonstrate adequate expertise undertake activities in all key areas.		Organisation has own experts in all areas. Experts (staff/external consultants) are recognised for their excellence and render services to other organisation that provide consultancy services.				
Strategy		Team development is accidental and based on emerging opportunities.		General directions implemented as far as team development is concerned but it is short-term and project based.		Team development is implemented on basis of need assessment and an existing action plan. Plan is coherent with mission.		Professional development is considered to be part of overall development of an organisation. It is supported by individual career development plans.				
Training		Team does not participate in training courses or take advantage of available opportunities to limited extent.		Training component is significant but is undertaken accidentally.		Training is generally consistent with development plan of organisation but neither systematic nor sufficient.		Provide training meets or exceeds needs of an individual career development plan.				
Mentoring		There is little or no coaching provided.		There is some coaching and counselling provided.		Staff receives adequate knowledge, coaching, and mentoring but mutual learning system of team is not integrated into organisation.		Important element of each staff member responsibility is perfection of one's professional skills.				
Motivation	Rewarding	There is little or no recognition of staff performance.		Achievements are noticed and recognised informally. There is no formal appraisal system.		Achievements are evaluated on basis of clear appraisal system.		Staff feels fully appreciated. their performance and achievements are evaluated on basis of clear and approved appraisal system sensitive to individual needs of staff members.				
	Engagement	Staff is not motivated. There is a common feeling of not being useful for organisation and being "burnt-out".		Staff members undertake tasks resulting from their job description.		Staff members undertake tasks that go beyond their job description.		Staff members are fully engaged in work of organisation combining their individual goals with those of organisation.				
Difficult Situations/Conflicts		Difficult situations and conflicts are not revealed.		Difficult situations and conflicts are revealed incidentally and discussed in corridors.		There are mechanisms of "opening" and addressing difficult situations and conflicts.		Conflicts are being addressed on on-going basis primarily between interested parties. Staff is not engaged in this process.				

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FINANCIAL RESOURCES					
<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Component</i>				
Financial Management	Planning	Budgets are not realistic. Budgets are developed as needed and are project or donor driven.	There is an overall budget but is developed as a sum of particular project budgets. Budget is not used as an important tool for decision making.	Organisation develops a multi-year budget but it is not used while making decision on current and long-term functioning of origination.	Financial planning is based on overall organisational budget that indicates financial trends in operational and long-term planning and management.
	Control	Financial management is monitored mainly by donors. Internal control mechanisms are weak.	There are internal procedures for financial monitoring but it is not systematic.	Financial monitoring is systematic and supports management of organisation. Monitoring is documented.	Internal monitoring is considered to be a permanent management function. All financial procedures are established in order to support operational management and long-term support. Organisation does not perceive monitoring as something out of ordinary.
	Reporting	Organisation has limited experience in financial reporting to donors.	Organisation presents timely financial reports on projects that meet requirements of donors.	Financial reports are clear and comprehensive also when portfolio of organisation becomes more complex. They are regularly used in operational management.	Reports and database can quickly provide information on overall financial condition of organisation. Reports are timely and transparent.
	Audits	External audits are not performed.	External audits are rarely performed.	External audits are performed but are not systematic.	External audits are performed with adequate frequency.
Financial Vulnerability	Funding Diversity	There is only one source of funding.	70% of funding comes from one donor.	50% of funding comes from one donor.	No more that 30% of funding comes from one donor.
	Local Resource Mobilisation	Organisation does not take advantage of local resources for its operations e.g. funding, services, in-kind support.	Local resource mobilisation is accidental.	There is a short-term local resource mobilisation strategy.	There is a long-term local resource mobilisation strategy. 20- 40% of annual expenditure is generated from local sources.
Financial Viability		Organisation does not have sufficient funding for supporting its projects.	Organisation has sufficient funding to cover particular projects' expenditure.	Organisation has sufficient funding to cover particular projects' expenditures. Medium-term funding strategies are developed.	Organisation has sufficient funding to cover all projects' expenditure as well as administrative expenses. It has funding secured for future (one-two years).

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EXTERNAL RESOURCES					
<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Component</i>				
Public Relations	Public Recognition	Organisation little known in its environment among donors and direct beneficiaries among others.	Organisation is known in its own community, but does little to promote its activities on a broader scale.	Organisation has contact with key decision-makers and has established communication channels with public.	Organisation and its work are well known to public and decision-makers. It is in a position to involve decision-makers in a policy dialogue and make them supporting its activities.
	Cooperation with Media	Organisation cooperates with media to a small extent. There are no communication mechanisms, meetings with press are accidental.	Organisation begins to seek for exposure in media. Contacts are usually based on specific events.	Organisation is in a position to access media through formal and informal channels. Exposure in media is frequent, but not strategic.	Organisation takes advantage of its contacts with media for benefit of effective communication with public. There is a developed media strategy. Organisation make attempts to make organisation known and foster a broader public awareness about organisation and its Mission.
Constituency		Organisation has little connection to its constituency. It operates in a centralised manner.	Organisation serves constituency based on its perception/assessment. There is no active involvement of constituency.	Organisation seeks for input for key decisions. Constituency views its efforts as a service provided to it.	Constituency is fully involved in planning, decision-making process and implementing and evaluating its performance.
Ability to work with local government		Relation between local government and organisation are often tensed. There is a clear division between "we" and "they".	Relations among two parties are friendly. Collaboration is occasional and relates to specific tasks and projects.	Collaboration is frequent and usually based on informal contacts. Relations are friendly but two sides do not consider themselves as equal partners.	There are formal and informal collaboration mechanisms that are often used. Two sides consider themselves equal partners.
Ability to work with central government		Relation between government and organisation are often tensed. There is a clear division between "we" and "they".	Relations are friendly. Collaboration occasionally occurs on specific tasks and projects.	Collaboration is frequent and usually based on informal contacts. Relations are friendly but two sides do not consider themselves as equal partners.	There are formal and informal collaboration mechanisms that are often used. Two sides consider themselves equal partners.
Ability to work with other NGOs		Organisation does not have experience in working with other NGOs. It is not known or trusted by NGO community.	Organization is increasingly known and trusted by NGO community. Experience with collaboration is based exclusively on project implementation.	Organisation collaborates with local and international NGOs. It participates in NGO networks and coalitions that are driven by needs of constituency.	Organisation plays a leadership role in promoting NGO coalitions driven by constituencies' needs. It is in a position to assist at resolving conflicts between NGOs or NGOs and government.